

Jurisdiction

- 1. This action is brought by the United States to enforce the provisions of Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 ("the Fair Housing Act"), as amended by the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3601 et seq., Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("the ADA"), § 202, 42 U.S.C. § 12132 et seq., and the regulations implementing Title II, 28 C.F.R. Part 35.
- 2. This Court has jurisdiction over this action under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1345, 42 U.S.C. § 3614(a) and (b), and 42 U.S.C. § 12133.
- 3. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because the events giving rise to the United States' claims occurred in the Central District of California.

The Defendant

- 4. Defendant City of San Jacinto ("the City") is a municipal corporation located in Riverside County, California, established and organized under the laws of the State of California.
- 5. The City of San Jacinto, through its Mayor and City Council, exercises zoning and land use authority over land within its boundaries. The City's Code of Ordinances contains the City's zoning and land use regulations.
- 6. The City's Zoning Code divides the City into numerous zoning districts, including four residential districts: single family residential districts (R-1), two family residential districts (R-2), multi-family residential districts (R-3), and "light agricultural" districts (A).
- 7. The Zoning Code defines "family" as "[a]n individual or two (2) or more persons related by blood, marriage or legal adoption, or a group of not more than 6 persons who are not related living together as a single house-keeping unit in a dwelling unit."

The Complainants

8. Rajeeyah Bilal-Varney is a resident of the Central District of California. Since May of 2007, she and her husband have operated a group home for persons with mental and other disabilities,

including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, at 1835 Rogers Way in a single-family (R-1) residential zone in San Jacinto.

- 9. Aurora Beltran is a resident of the Central District of California and, since 2005, has operated a group home for persons with mental and other disabilities at 325 E. 3rd Street in a single-family (R-1) residential zone in San Jacinto.
- 10. The disabled residents of the Rogers Way and 3rd Street homes operate as family units and share meals and household responsibilities. They are responsible for their own medications, do not receive medical treatment or counseling on the premises, and do not undergo drug or alcohol testing on site. A number of tenants at both homes have, over the years, arranged for State and County-funded supportive services delivered to the home by third-parties, such as training with respect to personal care.

Regulation of "group homes" under the City's Zoning Code

- 11. On July 10, 2008, the City's Planning Commission issued a staff report recommending that the City Council amend the City's Zoning Code by approving Ordinance 08-14 ("the Ordinance").

 The Ordinance was passed by unanimous vote of the Council on September 4, 2008, and became effective on October 3, 2008.
- 12. The Ordinance effected three changes to the City's Zoning Code. First, it amended the Code's definition of "group homes" to "[a] residence or dwelling, other than a hotel, wherein two (2) or more rooms, with or without individual cooking facilities, are rented to individuals under separate rental agreements or leases, either written or oral, whether or not an owner, agent or rental manager is in residence, in order to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood."
- 13. Second, the Ordinance created a separate category of congregate living known as the "organizational house." The term is defined by the Ordinance as "[a] residential lodging facility operated by a membership organization, such as a school, convent, monastery, or religious

organization, and includes dormitories, fraternities, sororities and other institutionally-operated student housing.

- 14. Third, the Ordinance specifically exempted certain licensed congregate living facilities, such as "community care facilities," from its definition of "group homes," making those with six or fewer residents permitted uses in residential zones.
- 15. Under the Zoning Code as amended by the Ordinance, group homes that are not required to be licensed by the State are not permitted uses in any zoning district within the City. Such homes may operate in multi-family (R-3) zones if they seek and are granted a conditional use permit.
- 16. The City adopted the Ordinance to address purported problems with group homes for persons with disabilities.
- 17. The Ordinance was enacted at least in part because of complaints about group homes from members of the community that the City knew, or should have known, were based on the disability of the homes' residents.
- 18. On November 4, 2008, approximately a month after the Ordinance was enacted, the City conducted an early morning sweep of nineteen homes, including the Bilal-Varney home located at 1835 Rogers Way, to determine, among other things, whether they were "group homes" for persons with disabilities operating in residential zones in violation of Ordinance 08-14.
- 19. City officials, including the City Attorney and representatives from the City's Code Enforcement, Public Works and Police Departments, and Riverside County officials under contract to and acting as agents for the City, including armed and uniformed sheriff's deputies, and uniformed fire department officials, appeared at the homes unannounced.
- 20. After inquiring on the threshold as to the nature of the homes, the officials entered those they determined to be group homes for persons with disabilities, separated the residents with disabilities and interrogated them individually from a prepared questionnaire targeted to persons with mental disabilities. The questions included why the residents were in the home; whether they were or

had ever been drug addicts or alcoholics; whether they were suffering from any form of mental illness, and if so, what type; whether they were taking "psych" medications, and if so, what kind; whether they were in treatment programs; whether they or other residents were currently using illegal drugs or alcohol; whether they were on parole or probation; whether they were registered sex offenders; whether they were collecting SSI or disability benefits; and whether medical treatment, counseling and drug treatment were provided on site.

- 21. Of the homes included in the sweep, at least fifteen were homes for persons with mental disabilities, including the home at 1835 Rogers Way. The officials did not inspect, or interrogate the residents of the four homes they determined were not group homes for persons with disabilities.
- 22. From the time the Ordinance was adopted through at least September 2011, the City brought no enforcement actions under the Ordinance against any group homes that were not occupied by persons with disabilities.
- 23. Each of the group homes covered in the sweep is a dwelling within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 3602(b), and current and former residents of those homes are "handicapped" within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 3602(h).
- 24. As a result of the Ordinance and the City's enforcement activities, some group homes for persons with disabilities closed. Others that continue to operate in residential zones, including the home at 1835 Rogers Way, have been repeatedly visited by the City and cited for violations of the Ordinance and other regulations. The City has issued fines to owners of group homes for persons with disabilities ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 per day.
- 25. Prior to enactment of the Ordinance, City officials informed at least one individual that she would have to close a home for five persons with mental disabilities on Garcia Drive in San Jacinto because City law prohibited the operation of the home in a residential zone. The home was closed after repeated contacts by City officials who claimed the home was being operated as an illegal group home.

- 26. After the sweep, the City continued to cite providers of group homes for persons with disabilities, including some not covered in the sweep, for "illegal" operation of a group home in a residential zone. The home operated by complainant Aurora Beltran at 325 E. 3rd Street is one such home.
- 27. Group homes for persons with disabilities included in the sweep, as well as those targeted by the City for enforcement activities after the sweep, were occupied by as few as three disabled tenants at a time. The City's actions against group homes for persons with disabilities, including the issuance of citations for the operation of illegal group homes, has continued into 2012.
- 28. The Garcia Drive home, the 325 E. 3rd Street home and other group homes investigated and/or cited by the City before and after the sweep, are dwellings within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 3602(b), and current and former residents of those homes are "handicapped" within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 3602(h).
- 29. Based on the sweep and other City actions, Ms. Bilal-Varney filed a complaint with the Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") on or about December 2, 2008, alleging discrimination in housing on the basis of disability in violation of the Fair Housing Act. On or about July 6, 2009, HUD referred the complaint to the Department of Justice pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 3614(a) of the Act.
- 30. Based on enforcement and other activities by the City, Ms. Beltran filed a complaint with HUD pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 3610(a) of the Fair Housing Act on or about June 9, 2012, alleging discrimination in housing on the basis of disability. On or about June 12, 2012, HUD referred the complaint to the Department of Justice pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 3610(g)(2)(C) of the Act.

Requests for Reasonable Accommodation

- 31. On May 16, 2011, complainant Rajeeyah Bilal-Varney sent a request to the City for a reasonable accommodation to continue operating the group home at 1835 Rogers Way.
- 32. On March 29, 2011, complainant Aurora Beltran sent a request for a reasonable accommodation to continue operating the group home at 325 E. 3rd Street.
- 33. On April 30, 2012, the provider of a group home for persons with disabilities on De Anza Drive in San Jacinto requested that her home be treated by the City as a single-family dwelling "for all purposes."
- 34. The City informed each of the providers that it did not have a process established by ordinance for deciding reasonable accommodation requests.
- 35. The City conditioned approval of the providers' requests on the acceptance of onerous, unjustified restrictions and failed to address legitimate inquiries of counsel for the providers, thereby effectively denying the requests.
- 36. The City of San Jacinto's zoning regulations and enforcement of those regulations impose conditions and prohibitions on housing for persons with disabilities that are not imposed on housing for an equal or greater number of persons without disabilities.
- 37. Persons with disabilities are more likely to live in congregate living facilities than are persons without disabilities in and around San Jacinto.
- 38. The City's actions as described herein have the intent and effect of discriminating against providers and residents of housing for persons with disabilities.

COUNT I Fair Housing Act

- 39. The allegations in paragraphs 1-38, above, are incorporated herein by reference.
- 40. By the actions set forth above, the City has:
 - a. made housing unavailable on the basis of disability in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 3604(f)(1);
 - b. imposed different terms, conditions, or privileges in housing on the basis of disability in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 3604(f)(2);
 - c. failed or refused to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when such accommodations may have been necessary to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 3604(f)(3)(B); and
 - d. coerced, intimidated, threatened, or interfered with persons in the exercise or enjoyment of, or on account of their having exercised or enjoyed, their rights under the Fair Housing Act, in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 3617.
- 41. The conduct of the City as described above constitutes (a) a pattern or practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of rights granted by the Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. § 3601-3619, or (b) a denial of rights to a group of persons that raises an issue of general public importance under 42 U.S.C. § 3614(a).
- 42. There are persons who have been injured by Defendant's discriminatory actions and practices who are aggrieved persons as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 3602(i).
- 43. The Defendant's discriminatory actions were intentional, willful, and taken in disregard of the rights of others.

COUNT II Americans with Disabilities Act

- 44. The allegations in paragraphs 1-43, above, are incorporated herein by reference.
- 45. The United States Department of Justice has notified the City in writing that based on its investigation, it had determined that enforcement action was warranted because of violations of the ADA. Resolution of the United States' claims has not been achieved by voluntary means. All conditions precedent to the filing of this Complaint have occurred or been performed.
- 46. The United States Department of Justice is the federal agency responsible for administering and enforcing Title II of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131 *et seq*.
 - 47. The Defendant, through the actions described above, has:
 - a. excluded persons with disabilities from participation in and denied them the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of a public entity, in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 12132 and 28 C.F.R. § 35.130; and
 - b. failed to make a reasonable modification in its policies, practices, or procedures, which resulted in the Defendant excluding persons with disabilities from participating in and denying them the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the City of San Jacinto in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 12132 and 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(7).
- 48. The Defendant's discriminatory actions were intentional, willful, and taken in disregard of the rights of others.
- 49. Persons who have been subjected to Defendant's conduct have suffered and will continue to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of relief.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the United States prays that the Court enter an ORDER that:

- 1. Declares that the actions of the City of San Jacinto described above constitute violations of the Fair Housing Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3601 et seq., and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131 et seq.;
- 2. Enjoins the City of San Jacinto, its agents, employees, assigns, successors, and all other persons in active concert or participation with them, from enforcing its Zoning Code in a way that discriminates on the basis of disability in violation of the Fair Housing Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 3601 et seq., and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131 et seq. and its accompanying regulations;
- 3. Enjoins the City of San Jacinto, its agents, employees, assigns, successors, and all other persons in active concert or participation with them, from failing to make reasonable accommodations in their policies, practices, rules, or services, as required by the Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act, including accommodations that permit the establishment and operation of housing for persons with disabilities pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 3604(f)(3)(B), 42 U.S.C. § 12132, and 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(7);
- 4. Awards compensatory damages in an appropriate amount to aggrieved persons for injuries suffered as a result of the City of San Jacinto's failure to comply with the requirements of the Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act; and

1	5. Assesses a civil penalty against the City of San Jacinto in an amount authorized by						
2							
3	42U.S.C. § 3614(d)(1)(C), in order to vindicate the public interest.						
4	The United States further prays for such additional relief as the interests of justice may require.						
5							
6	ERIC H. HOLDER, JR.						
7	Attorney General						
8							
9	Km E B						
10	ANDRÉ BIROTTE JR. United States Attorney THOMAS E. PEREZ Assistant Attorney General						
11	Central District of California Civil Rights Division						
12	LEON W. WEIDMAN Assistant United States Attorney						
13	Chief, Civil Division						
14	Shall Esenbaum / RTH						
15							
16	Assistant United States Attorney Chief, Housing and Civil Enforcement Section						
17	Assistant Division Chief Civil Rights Division Civil Rights Unit Chief, Civil Division						
18	(State Bar No. 130005) Robby, Monteleone@usdoj.gov						
19	,						
20	R. TAMARHAGLER						
21	Deputy Chief \(\frac{1}{2}\)						
22	(State Bar No. 189441) NANCY F. LANGWORTHY						
23	Trial Attorney U.S. Department of Justice						
24	Civil Rights Division						
25	Housing and Civil Enforcement Section 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. – G Street						
26	Washington, D.C. 20530 Phone: (202) 616-8925						
27	Fax: (202) 514-1116 Nancy.Langworthy@usdoj:gov						
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

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EDCV12-1966

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Case Number:

AFTER COMPLETING THE FRONT SIDE OF FORM CV-71, COMPLETE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW.

CV-71 (05/08) CIVIL COVER SHEET

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

VIII(a). IDENTICAL CASES: Has If yes, list case number(s):	this action been prev	riously filed in this court and	d dismissed, remanded or closed? ▼No □ Yes			
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IX. VENUE: (When completing the						
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* Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernar Note: In land condemnation cases, us	dino, Riverside, Ve	ntura, Santa Barbara, or S	San Luis Obispo Counties			
X. SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY (NAMABLA	Date November 9, 2012			
Notice to Counsel/Parties: The	e CV-71 (JS-44) Cir	vil Cover Sheet and the infored by the Judicial Conference	rmation contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings are of the United States in September 1974, is required pursuant to Local Rule 3-1 is not filed atting the civil docket sheet. (For more detailed instructions, see separate instructions sheet.)			
Key to Statistical codes relating to Sc	ocial Security Cases:					
Nature of Suit Code	Abbreviation	Substantive Statement o	of Cause of Action			
861	НІА	All claims for health insurance benefits (Medicare) under Title 18, Part A, of the Social Security Act, as amended. Also, include claims by hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, etc., for certification as providers of services under the program. (42 U.S.C. 1935FF(b))				
862	BL	All claims for "Black Lung" benefits under Title 4, Part B, of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. (30 U.S.C. 923)				
863	DIWC	All claims filed by insured workers for disability insurance benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended; plus all claims filed for child's insurance benefits based on disability. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))				
863	DIWW	All claims filed for widow Act, as amended. (42 U.S	ws or widowers insurance benefits based on disability under Title 2 of the Social Security S.C. 405(g))			
864	SSID All claims for supplemental security income payments based upon disability filed under Title 16 of the Act, as amended.					
865	RSI	All claims for retirement (old age) and survivors benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42 U.S.C. (g))				

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NOTICE OF ASSIGNMENT TO UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE FOR DISCOVERY

This case has been assigned to District Judge Virginia A. Phillips and the assigned discovery Magistrate Judge is Sheri Pym.

The case number on all documents filed with the Court should read as follows:

EDCV12- 1966 VAP (SPx)

Pursuant to General Order 05-07 of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, the Magistrate Judge has been designated to hear discovery related motions.

Al	All discovery related motions should be noticed on the calendar of the Magistrate Judge						
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			NOTICE TO COUNSEL				
A cop filed,	by of this notice must be served w a copy of this notice must be serv	ith the ed or	e summons and complaint on all def n all plaintiffs).	endar	its (if a removal action is		
Subs	equent documents must be filed a	at the	following location:				
	Western Division 312 N. Spring St., Rm. G-8 Los Angeles, CA 90012		Southern Division 411 West Fourth St., Rm. 1-053 Santa Ana, CA 92701-4516	IJ	Éastern Division 3470 Twelfth St., Rm. 134 Riverside, CA 92501		

Failure to file at the proper location will result in your documents being returned to you.